



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

EDITORIAL NOTES

There are many reasons why mere repetition of lessons is no longer practiced in schools. In the first place, there is so much good material to be presented that the teacher feels that the child will not come into contact with the world which science and industry have opened up unless new facts are crowded into every lesson. In the second place it is very difficult to whip up attention and keep alive interest when the subject-matter is familiar and partially mastered. In the third place, it is easy to devise tests which shall show the breadth of a pupil's knowledge and it is difficult to measure the depth and permanency of an impression on the mind. The school which gives the least breadth of training is consequently at a seeming disadvantage even if the depth of its training is greater.

There are other reasons of the same general type which have contributed to the result that drill has come to be almost a lost art in the modern school. One hears various devices described by which children are to be drilled without being allowed to become aware of what is going on. The same material, we are told, can be presented in various forms; the same principle can be exhibited in various settings; and the ends thus attained which were sought in the old-fashioned drill. Again we find some writers explicitly saying that the mind does not get general training except by sweeping over the whole world. The improvement of experience comes therefore through manifold activities of diverse types, there is no such thing as drilling a few fundamental faculties. The drill of the old school was aiming at a false goal.

It would be futile to criticize this tendency to omit or evade drill if one were armed only with prejudices in favor of the old-fashioned school. Modern reasons must be matched to modern reasons. Let us see if some reasons cannot be briefly presented in favor of drill. First, children in our present-day schools are confused

by the mass of material presented to them. They are rushed recklessly from fact to fact and left with fagged minds to wallow in the unorganized mass of new impressions. Many teachers could not organize the material which they give the children so that it would form a coherent, presentable paper for rehearsal before other teachers. How can children organize this material? We shall settle down some day to a few well-selected, well-arranged materials of instruction. We are suffering today from pedagogical surfeit and the absence of drill in our schools is one of the symptoms of this condition.

If our studies of brain physiology and functional psychology show one result more clearly than another it is that repetition is absolutely essential to mental development. Mutual development depends upon the organization of the nervous functions in such a way that impulses shall follow fixed paths of discharge. New impulses call for new organizations. One cannot reorganize at ever step, one must establish and fix before he can advance to higher organizations. The question of how education is to organize the individual—whether in higher or lower types of thought and behavior—depends for its answer very largely upon the time given to permanent organization as distinguished from mere temporary organization. The results which have been offered by scientific students in opposition to the doctrine of general mental discipline are often more valuable as criticisms of our present-day methods than as criticisms of the doctrine of discipline. There is many a course in geography which gives no general mental discipline. That does not prove that geography might not give mental discipline of a general type. The question which we ought to be discussing is not whether there is such a training as will discipline the general faculties, but rather how the most permanent effects may be produced through the training which we give.

“Drill” should be reintroduced into our pedagogical vocabularies. It represents a phase of method which is indispensable and clearly justifiable.